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FINAL RECORD OF THE SIX HUNDRED AND FIFTY-NINTH PLENARY MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Tuesday, 10 August 1993, at 10 a.m.

President: Mr. José Pérez Novoa (Cuba)

GE.93-61981 (E)

The PRESIDENT (translated from Spanish): I declare open the 659th plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament. As we agreed at the informal meeting last Thursday, the Conference will today hold another informal meeting to examine document CD/1209 submitted by the delegations of Australia, Mexico and Nigeria and the draft terms of reference for an Ad hoc Committee on agenda item 1 that will be circulated by the delegation of Australia. At this informal meeting, members will also be able to exchange views on the consultations held since Thursday. I shall convene the informal meeting after we have heard the speakers on the list for today.

Once the plenary and informal meetings are over, the Conference will hold an informal consultation open to all delegations in the context of its work on its improved and more effective functioning. The topic to be examined will be the optical disk system being developed by the United Nations Office at Geneva.

The list of speakers for today includes the representatives of the Islamic Republic of Iran and of Belgium. I now give the floor to the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Ambassador Nasseri.

Mr. NASSERI (Islamic Republic of Iran): Mr. President, as this is the first meeting in which my delegation has taken the floor under your presidency, allow me to extend my sincerest congratulations to you on assuming this responsibility. It is gratifying to see the Conference on Disarmament presided over by you and led by your skilful stewardship. May I assure you of the fullest support and cooperation of my delegation. I would like also to sincerely thank Ambassador Amorim of Brazil, Mr. Deyanov of Bulgaria, Ambassador Shannon of Canada, and Ambassador Hou Zhitong of China, for the most efficient and exemplary manner with which they conducted our previous meetings. My thanks go also to the Secretary-General of the Conference, Ambassador Berasategui, and his very able staff for their tireless efforts. Furthermore, I wish to extend a warm welcome to our new colleagues, Ambassador Dobrev of Bulgaria, Ambassador Berdennikov of the Russian Federation, Ambassador Saboia of Brazil and Ambassador Guillaume of Belgium.

May I seize this opportunity to express my Government's condolences on the sad demise of King Baudoin to the people and Government of Belgium.

Much valuable work has been done in this Conference ever since its inception and major progress, and success, were made in a number of areas in the fields of disarmament. But I wish today to attempt to highlight some of those areas in which, in our view, difficulties continue to exist and remedies are called for in order to preserve, uphold and strengthen the achievements we have so far had, or we anticipate to have, in the future. It is intended as a realistic look at what is often neglected and not given due consideration. Because of its tremendously significant impact on the security of our world, partial achievements in certain areas of disarmament are gratifying only to the extent that they serve as a springboard for the next step until the ultimate objective of general and complete disarmament has been realized. Therefore, there is really not much

point in congratulating ourselves for our successes; rather, we should always maintain a vigilant awareness at what has remained unsettled.

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At the present juncture, one must particularly be concerned that, as the excitement over ending of the cold war settles, the noble expectations of humanity are also being tamed. For four decades people around the globe lived under the terrifying peril of nuclear catastrophe. They were made to believe, by the politicians of that era, that the East-West rivalry was a fact of life they simply had to live with. They were, therefore, to feel secured so long as the balance of terror, or deterrence, based on an abundance of weapons of mass destruction, notably nuclear weapons, was not detrimentally tilted. The same politicians have now become engaged in much burdensome manoeuvring in order to convince the people that there is no need any more to push for removal of nuclear weapons from the face of the Earth; that the tensions at global level amongst the powerful countries have substantially been reduced and, therefore, the continued existence of thousands upon thousands of nuclear weapons on the planet is no longer a threat; and that they can relax and allow the slow pace of disarmament to continue its path without haste or acceleration.

Of course, one cannot deny the fact that the world today is more secure and that the persistent high state of alert has, for the time being, come to a halt. True that no longer fingers are at the button to start or retaliate against a nuclear attack. But this fortunate and natural consequence of East-West thaw should by no means mask the dangers and threats still posed by the stubborn existence of so much nuclear weaponry around the globe.

As we witness today discussions and negotiations are still centred around reduction of nuclear arsenals rather than their eradication. We all take time, for instance, to praise the conclusion of START-2 and to call for proper implementation of START-1. Whereas, with the cold war over, we no longer should devote so much interest to START Treaties. The requirements of the time have changed. Today the world desires and deserves only a STOP treaty, i.e. Strategic and nuclear arms Out of our Plant.

I believe it is quite shocking that no major country possessing nuclear weapons has really come forward in this regard. The minimum expected is a pronouncement of the intention to destroy the entire stockpiles of the nuclear arsenal once and for all. Yet, as we move further away from the end point of the cold war rivalry - that climactic, historical, unforgettable point - the ideal of nuclear disarmament, now realistically achievable, loses colour and fades. This is not something that we should take lightly.

The time has come for a sincere and deep review of reasons and justifications, if there ever were any acceptable ones, for the persistence of nuclear armaments in the world. States that hold massive stockpiles of nuclear weapons have at least a moral obligation to explain to the international community what remains the logic behind maintaining nuclear weapons. Are they waiting to see whether the world is enough secure for them? Or, conditions under which they may feel safe enough to let go of the nuclear option have not yet come

about? We all recognize that, in the post-cold-war era, new instabilities emanating from excessive nationalism, ethnic rivalry

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and regional conflicts have emerged. But the existing megatons of nuclear bombs can by no means have any relevance to these new forms of tension. Then, quite frankly, the world has the right to know who these weapons are intended for and who they are to deter any more.

Nuclear weapons, in my view, owe their continued existence mostly to the perception that they bring prestige, clout and power to their owner which translate into political leverage in international affairs. After all, the five permanent members of the Security Council are still alone in possessing excessive amounts of nuclear weapons. So long as this perception persists, and is not made to alter, there cannot be much hope for a world free of nuclear weapons.

In 1968, the aspirations for nuclear disarmament were quite skilfully contained and reduced to an objective at much lower levels - non-proliferation. Despite this, both the letter and the spirit of the Non-Proliferation Treaty underline quite clearly that this is but one step and that the objectives of cessation of the nuclear arms race and eventual nuclear disarmament remain supreme. Before the important Review Conference in 1995, the non-nuclear-weapon States parties to the NPT have a legitimate right to demand a thorough examination of the current negotiating trends to ensure that the objective of nuclear disarmament is indeed in sight and is not slipped under the carpet.

The Non-Proliferation Treaty was indeed a major achievement for a time when the East-West tension and rivalry was at its peak. No doubt it has contributed to international peace and security by partially containing the threats of nuclear weapons. But non-proliferation was never to be perceived as an end, but only a means and a vehicle towards the objective of nuclear disarmament. In examining the possibilities for future extension of the Treaty, therefore, we would have to look at what has been achieved in the CD and other multilateral forums in implementation of those provisions of the Treaty which deal with nuclear disarmament.

True that there has been movement in reducing the number of nuclear warheads. True also that prospects for a nuclear test ban seems more realistic today. But these are not enough. A comprehensive test-ban treaty would be an important effective instrument to prevent further proliferation of nuclear arms in all its aspects. We shall not forget, nonetheless, that it will still be another instrument for the purpose of ensuring non-proliferation. As such, and in the absence of a well-defined and established programme for nuclear disarmament, one cannot be certain of a world free of nuclear weapons at some envisaged time in our future. Yet, even for the nuclear test ban, despite encouraging signals, there are still arguments against immediate action and calls to continue business as usual. Negotiations for a comprehensive test-ban treaty thus remain pending.

The undertaking in the NPT was that the nuclear arms race, "at an early date" should be ceased and that nuclear disarmament should be realized. Twenty-

five years after the Treaty, and some three years into the new era of cooperation, one can not claim yet that the nuclear arms race is over. Furthermore, there is still no clear-cut commitment towards nuclear

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disarmament, much less a treaty on general and complete disarmament. The contracting parties who have faithfully observed the Treaty deserve to learn when this "early date" is finally to arrive.

This includes the prevention of an arms race in outer space. On this, as you are all aware, we are still at square one dealing almost indefinitely with terminology and confining our objectives to some confidence-building measures while the race in outer space continues unabated. We can not endeavour to bring an end to the arms race on the planet and allow it, at the same time, to expand in space. There is an urgent need for a change in attitude by those States which are filling the orbits with military and spy satellites. We therefore need to harmonize our work and engage in real negotiations towards conclusion of an international agreement or agreements on the prevention of an arms race in outer space with a view to enforcing the existing legal regime, while taking up confidence-building measures in the interim. The Earth will not be safe so long as outer space is becoming more and more militarized.

Another area of concern which hampers efforts towards disarmament is the selective approach in the implementation of existing instruments. The case of the NPT once again presents a clear example. Aside from a disregard for provisions related to nuclear disarmament, there has also been a differentiated treatment of the contracting parties. It is no secret that while some countries have even been assisted by major nuclear-weapon Powers to gain nuclear weapons capability, others, simply suspected to have a potential in this field, have been extensively suppressed. In a number of instances countries party to the NPT which have fulfilled their obligations on the basis of the Treaty have suffered more political and economic pressure than those which have remained outside and followed their nuclear agenda at their own will.

It is often argued that means of verification and safeguards are not sufficient to ascertain the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons. But if this argument becomes, as it has, a pretext for individual interpretation and action by different countries, then what is the use of the Treaty itself? Unfortunately, powerful countries always tend to act on the basis of their own interpretations of the Treaty and their own sources of information, rather than what the Treaty and its safeguards actually provide. Therefore, further improvements in the field of verification and safeguards will be useful only if it is confirmed that this would become the sole basis for judging compliance of the contracting parties with the Treaty.

Those committed, on the other hand, should be assured of their security through assurances by nuclear-weapon States. The Kosygin proposal, at the time of negotiations, was set aside despite the broad support it had received. But remember, again, that was the cold-war era. Today, the concept is accepted but

progress is not in sight. This despite the fact that, at the CD, only the Ad Hoc Committee on NSA has a negotiating mandate.

With no real move towards a multilateral legally-binding treaty on effective international arrangements to assure non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons, one can not expect the non-nuclear-weapon States parties to the NPT to be enthusiastic about the

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extension of the Treaty. We have been for years entangled in procedural discussions ad absurdum instead of tackling the substance. It is quite clear that the legitimate demands of non-nuclear-weapon States in this regard have been neglected. The problem certainly does not lie in the lack of ability to find a common formula; what is missing, is a political will and commitment to make a meaningful move to provide assurances for non-nuclear-weapon States.

Along with this, there should be an understanding that countries which have chosen not to join in order to keep their option for access to nuclear weapons must be treated differently from those which have made commitments. We need incentives for the have-nots and disincentives for the haves. The NPT should, thus, be extended in such a way that all countries would find it clearly in their interest to join. The incentive must include a binding commitment to what has already been provided for in the Treaty for the peaceful use by all contracting parties. Further, a mechanism must be set up to ensure that commitments related to peaceful use are realized and all discriminatory measures are lifted.

The text of the NPT stipulated, clearly, that research, production and use of nuclear energy should in no way be affected for the parties and there should be no discrimination in this regard. Indeed the parties to the Treaty were to be guaranteed access to material, equipment and scientific and technological information for the peaceful use of nuclear energy. Many proposals submitted at the time, including the famous "Fanfani proposal", called for availability of nuclear material from converted nuclear weapons at reduced prices to countries parties to the Treaty.

Although not all those proposals eventually found their way into the actual Treaty, they became the basis of understanding upon which compromises were reached and hence decisions by States to join the Treaty. Today it has become absolutely evident that material and technologies related to peaceful use are intended to be denied to most contracting parties save a few who fall in the category of political and military allies. Discrimination is the rule and not even the exception. Countries that do not have the best relations with some powerful nuclear States particularly suffer, no matter how scrupulously they observe the provisions of the Treaty and the related safeguards. The discriminatory approach in the implementation of the provisions related to peaceful use has been formalized in creation of bodies outside the Treaty, such as the London Club.

The same is true for the Australia Group as regards, particularly, chemical and biological materials and technology. As much as the work of the CD deserves

to be commended in finally formulating the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction, as much as we may be satisfied over the support that this Convention received, with over 140 signatories in a short time, as much yet as the work at The Hague towards preparing for implementation of the Convention is progressing steadily, smoothly and successfully, the worries of the developing countries as expressed consistently throughout the negotiations have not been allayed, but have even been magnified.

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Here the Australia Group was to remove limits and barriers on export of chemical material perceived as having dual use, hence restricting limitations to only that which has been agreed in the Convention after years of negotiations. I submit that the Convention is not yet ready to be implemented. But instead of receiving positive indications, we have seen the Australia Group list grow further. We have also witnessed discriminatory moves against specific countries which were in the forefront of supporting the Convention and have signed it at its first opening ceremony in Paris. There is already a growing concern, as the result, that the enthusiasm of many countries to sign the Convention will give way to reluctance or, at least, indifference when comes the time for ratification and implementation. The small number of ratifications so far in comparison with the number of signatories is a vivid signal.

The arbitrary limitations on transfer of material and technology have also already had negative effects on discussions to formulate verification mechanisms related to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on their Destruction. Many hours of discussion and work among the experts to produce ideas on verification ended with strong expressions of concern by developing and non-aligned countries. They rightfully stated, on the basis of past experience in the NPT, the CWC and other treaties, that they will not go along with an intrusive verification system as it may once again hamper development in the field of peaceful use in another very significant area. They seek this time real guarantees and commitments for transfer of material and related technology by the producing countries before considering new verification systems.

Then comes the question of transparency in armaments, an agenda item of the Conference to which my delegation attaches great importance and interest. After some hesitation on the part of developing States, eventual consensus was built around a resolution which provided the basis of further work by the Conference on Disarmament. One would have expected here that, after long discussions and debates preceding the consensus, actual follow-up would tend to be smooth. But again lack of confidence in the intention of powerful countries has manifested itself in the form of real impediments towards progress in this regard.

Here the developing countries are faced with uncertainties on four specific grounds. First, like other agreements in the field of disarmament, there should be, and there will be, an enhanced security for all. Yet the selective and discriminatory approach that has been persistent so far, coupled with treatment

of countries on the basis of level of political relations, or lack of relations, with powerful countries rather than on the merits of compliance, can put the security of different States at risk. Second, the definition of what lies within the scope of our new endeavours is extremely vague and left for individual interpretations. This may give room to political manipulations of any eventual agreement in this field. Military holdings are a major component in the possible expansion of the Register and should include holdings in other territories as well as military support committed by other States through bilateral or multilateral agreements and pacts. Third, weapons of mass destruction which were agreed to be a part of this exercise, are deliberately subdued, despite the fact that transparency

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for these weapons has definitely more significant effect and impact on our security than that of conventional weapons. Fourth and foremost, a serious and unfortunately well-justified concern that technology and material related to peaceful use and essential for the development of developing countries will again be denied or severely restricted by newly-made clubs. As regards this last point it is essential to ensure that: availability of material and high technology applicable to civilian use is not hampered; transfer of technology to developing countries is substantially improved and facilitated; export-control regimes are curbed and limited to internationally agreed arrangements; and dual-purpose material and technology, while made more transparent, are not denied.

The shortcomings I have underlined so far represent some of the most major problems impeding rapid and substantial progress in various areas of disarmament. To avert this, powerful countries have to take steps to restore confidence and to give the developing countries a sense of trust, certainty and security and remove their legitimate reasons for suspicion and scepticism.

There is yet another area which also bears much significance and requires focused attention. This relates to the regional aspects of disarmament. Problems in this area are varied among different regions. Those who have established forums for discussing security and disarmament can, naturally, adapt to new disarmament measures and coordinate their work more rapidly and smoothly. Problems are abundant, however, in other regions, particularly where tensions and conflicts prevail.

The Middle East is a candid example of how all disarmament measures and agreements can come to a grid-lock. The initiative for a Middle East free of nuclear weapons proposed nearly two decades ago, and adopted and consistently reiterated by the General Assembly ever since, is gathering dust because Israel does not intend to let go of its nuclear weapons. Extension of the NPT stands to meet heavy resistance by regional countries so long as Israel fails to join the NPT and submit its nuclear facilities to verification and IAEA safeguards.

Some of the neighbouring countries have thus, justifiably, refrained from signing the Chemical Weapons Convention. Extended verification measures for the Biological Weapons Convention are likely to meet the same fate. Transparency in armaments also does not have a chance to get off the ground. No country in the

region has yet submitted a set of data for the register of armaments in accordance with General Assembly Resolution 46/36/L. Unfortunately, one can not hope for an improvement of the situation in the Middle East as long as Israel's policies on nuclear weapons remain unaltered.

In the Persian Gulf, on the other hand, the prospects are much more promising. Following two devastating wars, the countries in the region seem quite prepared and anxious for peace, stability and cooperation. Threat of weapons of mass destruction from within the region has been substantially removed after the second Persian Gulf War. Moreover, nearly all countries in the region have joined the NPT, the CWC, the BWC and other major disarmament treaties. What still breeds tension is lack of confidence, insufficiency of

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dialogue and the excessive imports of sophisticated conventional weaponry, particularly from major exporting countries who seek to reap the benefits of the wars.

Initiatives here are, therefore, certain to ensure enhancement of security and stability of the Persian Gulf. Such initiatives may include: regional arrangements towards a nuclear-weapon-free zone and to ensure compliance; cooperation in the areas of peaceful use of nuclear energy; exchange of views on the NPT and the IAEA safeguards and examination of complementary regional verification mechanisms; coordination on ratification and implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention; expert consultations to devise arrangements for verification of the Biological Weapons Convention within the region; development of ways and means to enhance transparency in armaments, including simultaneous periodic data reporting on military holdings; negotiations to curb defence spending and reduce purchases of arms and devote the revenues thus saved to the development of the region; cooperation in conversion of some military production facilities to civilian ones; establishment finally of a forum to discuss security issues, threat perceptions and military doctrines and to arrange confidence-building measures.

The list of course is not exhaustive and may include any other positive initiative which may contribute to the collective security of the Persian Gulf. Efforts are needed, at the political level, to start with any initiative which can bring the countries of the region around one table to discuss their security. A process is sure to follow which would soon extend to cover many security-related areas. This, indeed, is a very important issue that deserves particular attention. We shall dwell further, therefore, upon this at appropriate times in future.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Spanish): I thank Ambassador Nasseri for his valuable and substantial statement and for his kind words to the Chair.

Baron GUILLAUME (Belgium) (translated from French): Welcoming the moves made recently by Presidents Clinton and Yeltsin to extend their moratoriums on nuclear testing and by President Mitterand to participate actively within the CD in negotiations on a universal and internationally verifiable comprehensive test-ban treaty, I should not like to let slip the opportunity now given to me to comment on the two drafts, a draft decision and a draft mandate, which have been submitted to us and to reiterate Belgium's position on the subject.

Like other delegations which have already taken the floor, and in keeping with the habitual procedure within the CD, our preference, while we would not reject the draft decision route if there were consensus on it, goes rather to the second proposal. It has the advantage of going straight to the desired end, that of giving the Ad Hoc Committee a negotiating mandate. In our view, a comprehensive test-ban treaty should, moreover, have to have the following characteristics: it should be negotiated from the outset in all its aspects within the Conference on Disarmament; it should be of universal application and internationally and effectively verifiable. There in brief you have the content

in which we view our participation in the negotiations, which we hope will soon begin, for a comprehensive test-ban treaty.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN (Australia): I should like to reiterate the validity of the statement I made on 20 August 1992 to the Conference on Disarmament. In that statement, I announced, on behalf of the members of the Australia Group, the willingness of the members of the Group, upon entry into force of the Chemical Weapons Convention, to review the operation of the Group's activities with the view to removing restrictions on transfers to States parties in good standing to the Chemical Weapons Convention.

In order to ensure that the non-proliferation and commercial benefits of the Group's activities are more widely understood, and pending the review to which the Group is committed, the Group has, since making the above commitment, also undertaken to make its activities more transparent. To do this, it has been given extensive briefings in capitals of interested non-members after each meeting of the Group.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Spanish): I have no further speakers on the list for today. Does any other delegation wish to take the floor?

As announced at the beginning of this plenary meeting, I shall now suspend the meeting and convene the informal meeting devoted to item 1 of our agenda, "Nuclear test ban". In order to permit additional consultations on that topic, we shall resume the plenary meeting in 20 minutes' time. Once consideration of this first matter is complete, we shall devote a few minutes to the draft communication to the International Atomic Energy Agency which the secretariat has circulated today, so that we can finalize our decision on it when we resume the plenary meeting.

The plenary meeting is suspended. We shall meet again in 20 minutes in this room.

The meeting was suspended at 10.55 a.m. and resumed at 12.15 p.m.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Spanish): The 659th plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament is resumed.

The Conference has before it a draft decision circulated by the secretariat and dated today concerning agenda item 1. I understand that the text of this draft has been the subject of intensive consultations as a result of which there is a consensus concerning it, subject to one slight change in the first preambular paragraph, namely the deletion of the word "recent". That being the case, and if there is no objection, I shall submit the draft as amended to the Conference for decision. Do I take it that the Conference adopts the draft?

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Spanish): I should say that this decision is without prejudice for the consultations being conducted in New York to the same end as we are seeking and with a view to facilitating the negotiation of a comprehensive test-ban treaty.

Mr. LEDOGAR (United States of America): Mr. President, even though sometimes in the fast lane things happen rapidly, I did just join a consensus on behalf of the United States in favour of the decision which you placed before us, but I feel constrained to make a certain explanation of my action in that regard. It is an explanation in the nature of making clear that from the United States perspective, this CD decision says what it does say but it does not say what it does not say. By that I mean that for us we are not agreeing hereby to commence CTBT negotiations in the CD now, but rather we are agreeing to do so later, after we have first reached agreement on the specific mandate for our Conference's nuclear testing Committee. As our British colleague pointed out last week, we believe as he does, that the five nuclear-weapon States have particular responsibility for ensuring the success of the negotiations and, in that regard, the United States is continuing discussions with the other four on the question of the way ahead in these negotiations. Even as these discussions continue for us, we have agreed it would be appropriate as the decision states for the NTB Ad Hoc Committee Chairman to conduct informal consultations on how to organize the negotiations, including on this specific mandate.

Mr. QUIROS (Peru) (translated from Spanish): Mr. President, I have asked for the floor in my capacity as Coordinator of the Group of 21; I am sure that Ambassador Urrutia would have liked to have been in this room now, at what I would term a historic moment for the work of the CD, but as he is attending another meeting, I am taking his place. On behalf of the Group of 21, I would like to extend our warmest congratulations to you for the excellent work you have done and which has enabled us to take a step forward that I am sure will go down in the annals of this Conference and, I believe, opens up a new stage in what lies ahead of us. The Group of 21 considers that the decision that has just been adopted provides the opportunity the Group has been seeking for many years of initiating a comprehensive test-ban treaty that is universal and internationally verifiable. We offer you our warmest congratulations and the Group is ready to go on very actively and to participate very actively in the consultations Ambassador Tanaka will be holding in order to have a mandate as soon as possible, as stated in the last paragraph of the decision.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Spanish): I am very grateful to the representative of Peru, especially for his kind words, but I must say that the outcome is the fruit of the efforts of all delegates and delegations to bring the various positions closer together and to seek flexibly and in a constructive spirit for the decision we have adopted. I may have played some role, but that role would not have been possible without the understanding and flexibility shown by a large part of the delegations present here and involved.

Mr. ERRERA (France) (translated from French): Mr. President, I too welcome the consensus that has just been achieved on the document and extend my congratulations to you. We are particularly gratified because the document includes two points that we and, I think, many others, have viewed as essential from the outset. The first concerns the nature of the treaty to be negotiated within the Conference on Disarmament. That nature has to do with the fact that, as we have said on several occasions, the major objective that we are pursuing is the prevention of the proliferation of nuclear weapons and,

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in so far as that is our objective, we have always felt that a test-ban treaty must be universal, by which I mean not only as regards accession, but also as regards participation, the involvement from the outset of all the players, and secondly that it must be really and internationally verifiable in order to be genuinely deterrent. The second point that we felt to be essential and that is contained in the decision that we have just taken concerns the negotiating forum. We, like many others - I would say like everyone, have made it very clear from the outset that, for the objective we have set ourselves to be attainable, the treaty must be negotiated multilaterally and, as the Conference on Disarmament is the international community's sole negotiating body and is representative of the international community where disarmament is concerned, it is logical that it should be the negotiating forum; that, too, is contained in the document. We are also pleased that a clear signal has been given to the Ad Hoc Committee amending its negotiating mandate as regards principles. That corresponds to the wish expressed by Ambassador O'Sullivan for the giving of a signal, a clear political symbol; that has been done in the penultimate paragraph. That is what I would call a decision of principle, one free from conditions, even though, as stated in the last paragraph of the document, consultations are naturally to be held to determine the contents, the details of the mandate. Those are the reasons for our satisfaction. As for the role of the five nuclear Powers, I will simply repeat what we have always said, namely that consultations between the five nuclear Powers in Geneva, in parallel with the negotiations in the Conference - that is to say, at the same time and on the same topics, will certainly be of use.

Mrs. CARVALHO DE PLASA (Mexico) (translated from Spanish): It is with a feeling of great satisfaction that I am taking the floor in this plenary meeting and this time I have not prepared any statement, so I shall be extremely brief. We have taken the first step in a process that started 30 years ago and that we celebrated some days ago, and we are now in a position to complete a peace process to which we are all dedicated. For that reason, because of the decision which you have just put before us and which our Coordinator rightly qualified as historic, allow me to express our sincerest thanks to you, Mr. President, for your efforts and to those who made their contribution in the consultations which finally produced the result that we now have and all welcome.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Spanish): Would any other speaker like to take the floor? The Ambassador of Japan, Ambassador Tanaka, has the floor as the Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee.

Mr. TANAKA (Japan): My delegation welcomes the decision just adopted to give a mandate to negotiate the CTB. I, as the Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee on NTB, feel greatly honoured at having been entrusted with the important task by this decision. I am intending to start my preparations immediately to implement this decision and I shall do my best and hope that all the delegations will cooperate fully for the smooth preparation of the CTB negotiations.

The PRESIDENT: Thank you, Ambassador Tanaka. I am sure that the same constructive climate and interest in moving forward towards the treaty will be apparent in the negotiations over which you will be presiding this week.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN (Australia): First of all, Mr. President, I would like to thank you for the energy and the determination that you have shown over the last weeks to bring us to this very satisfactory and very happy outcome that we have achieved this morning, and I think that, although you are suitably modest, you were also not really entirely accurate in excusing yourself from a central and very happy role in this outcome and I thank you. I should also like to thank my colleagues from Mexico and Nigeria for allowing the Australian delegation to work with them in the early stages of the deliberations which led up to our decision this morning and I would also like to thank the other delegations around the room who in various ways and at various points showed flexibility that is reflected in our document. It is a good example of how this Conference can work effectively. As others have said, I believe this decision we have taken will send a powerful political signal of our collective determinations to get on with the work that many of us have been looking forward to for so long. It also demonstrates again in a very clear way the utility of this forum as a negotiating body that can, with determination, attack the problems before it. So, we see this as the start of a journey that many of us have been awaiting impatiently for a long time and the signal that we are starting it is something that we entirely welcome. To assure the last speaker, the Ambassador of Japan, Australia will be ready whenever he is, to commence collaboration with him to start the consultations that are mandated in the last part of our decision.

Mr. KAMAL (Pakistan): Mr. President, we have taken an important decision today which is the first step towards an objective to which many have aspired for several years. I would like to assure you that in the follow-up of this decision over the coming months and year, you will have the full support and cooperation of the Pakistan delegation for an objective to which Pakistan is fully committed.

Mr. ADEKEYE (Nigeria): My delegation wishes to place on record its satisfaction that the Conference has been able to adopt this historic decision. I therefore wish to congratulate you, Mr. President, for the efforts in ensuring that the Conference has been able to reach consensus on this decision. Finally, I wish to pledge our full support to the distinguished Ambassador of Japan, the Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee, in his task ahead.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Spanish): As we agreed in the informal meeting a few minutes ago, and pursuant to rule 41 of our rules of procedure, I

shall transmit to the Director-General of IAEA the communication that was distributed today.

I have no further business to deal with in this plenary meeting. Permit me, then, to make my closing statement at the conclusion of Cuba's presidency.

I have to say before I read my text that this is a statement that I have had to redraft and to which I have had to make a number of changes, sometimes on a positive note and at others with what, I felt, had to be some pessimism

(The President)

and an appeal to everybody to try to reach the decision. However, that is life and even more so the business of negotiation, and the way things have worked out we now have the decision and I have, of course, had to change my statement again.

Today, our presidency of the Conference on Disarmament comes to an end. During this period there have been events that I consider to be of importance for the Conference and for the interests of our countries. I am referring to the positive developments concerning item 1 of the agenda of the Conference, the total ending of nuclear tests. I hope that the stimulus given in this respect by the important political decisions adopted by a number of nuclear countries, by the result that we have attained, and by the intensive negotiations will swiftly bear fruit with the conclusion in this forum of a new internationally verifiable multilateral agreement that will attract universal accession.

The favourable negotiating climate as regards item 1 of our agenda has enabled us to adopt today an important decision that will unquestionably help to further the achievement of our objectives and hopes in this respect. It has also enabled us to decide to issue an invitation, at a date to be decided later, to a representative of the International Atomic Energy Agency, who will engage in exchanges with delegations on the possibility that the Agency will one day play a role in the verification of a comprehensive test-ban treaty.

We also welcome the general recommendations for the drafting of the annual report that have resulted from the skilful process of consultation conducted by Ambassador Kamal of Pakistan. It will undoubtedly enable us to submit our substantive positions to the General Assembly in a more appropriate and practical form.

I am grateful to the Ambassador of Australia, the Conference's special coordinator for the question of the expansion of its membership, for the positive way in which he reacted to our interest in moving this process forward. From what Ambassador O'Sullivan had told us, this forum will shortly be able to examine his recommendation.

I should like to thank the observer delegation of Switzerland for its contacts with its Government concerning the privileges and immunities of ambassadors to the Conference on Disarmament and for the positive response obtained in this respect.

It has been for my country and for me personally an honour to discharge this responsibility. I wish once again to thank my predecessor for his excellent stewardship and to extend to my successor my best wishes for success in his term of office. I also wish to express my gratitude for its support to the diligent and efficient team from the secretariat and, in particular, to Ambassador Berasategui, the Secretary-General of the Conference, who always facilitated my task. To all delegations I offer my thanks for their cooperation and support, which, as always, we shall reciprocate.

(The President)

Before adjourning this plenary meeting, I would like to remind you that immediately afterwards we were to hold informal consultations open to all delegations concerning the optical disk system being developed by the United Nations Office at Geneva. Unfortunately, since our work today has lasted longer than expected, these consultations will now take place next Thursday, after the plenary meeting. The next plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament will be held on Thursday, 12 August at 10 a.m. The meeting is adjourned.

The meeting rose at 12.40 p.m.